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THE JEWS IN ROUMANIA

SPEECH

OF

HON. J. HAMPTON MOORE  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1913



WASHINGTON

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## SPEECH

OF

### HON. J. HAMPTON MOORE.

MR. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, at the instance of certain of my constituents who are students of international conditions, I have introduced a resolution requesting the Secretary of State to inform the House with respect to the prospects of an adjustment of the problem of the Jews in Roumania. Since the Russo-Turkish War and the Berlin treaty of July, 1878, there have been frequent reports of the failure of the Roumanian Government to observe that clause of the treaty which provided that citizenship should not be denied on account of religion. It is claimed by Jews who have migrated to the United States that the citizenship clause was inserted on the motion of the French plenipotentiary, M. Waddington, seconded by Lord Disraeli, of England, especially with a view to the rights of those natives of Roumania who responded to the Jewish faith. It appears that these complaints were officially recognized by John Hay, the Secretary of State, in 1902, and that there was considerable diplomatic correspondence with reference thereto, without effectuating relief. As late as 1904 it was reported to the Secretary of State that a better feeling existed as between the so-called "indigenous Jews" and the Government and that certain of the Jewish newspapers advised "against any measures from outside in behalf of Roumanian Jews."

Little appears to have been done since 1904 by the United States or any other country to induce the Roumanian Government to place itself in harmony with the other powers signatory to the Berlin treaty on the Jewish citizenship question. The attitude of the Roumanian Government, hedged about as it is by contending and ambitious powers, appears to have been directed toward keeping the Roumanian nationality free from possible Jewish assimilation. It was estimated by Mr. Hay in 1902 that the number of Jews in Roumania all told did not exceed 400,000. It appeared, however, that the Roumanians, numbering 7,000,000 or 8,000,000, were fearful of being overrun, and that this constituted the real objection to the observance of the Berlin treaty with regard to the Jews. The adoption of any naturalization agreement which would enforce the recognition of Jews not indigenous to Roumania seems to have been objected to upon the same ground.

The failure of Roumania to treat with the United States in this matter might be excused, because the United States was not a party to the treaty of Berlin. At first blush it must be conceded that notwithstanding the human rights involved, to say nothing of the breach of treaty stipulations, the United States has no right to meddle in this affair. Apparently this thought has been in the minds of diplomats, who, with the exception of Mr. Hay, have hitherto approached the question with great delicacy. While Mr. Hay was characteristically diplomatic, he was also extremely frank, and did not hesitate in his instructions to the American minister to Greece and Roumania to point out the political disabilities of the Jews in Roumania and the effect of Roumanian oppressive measures upon their manhood. Mr. Hay even maintained that by reason of the conditions prevailing in the country of their birth many of them emigrated to the United States, upon which an additional responsibility was imposed because of such immigration. He raised the rather novel point that—"human beings so circumstanced have virtually no alternatives but submissive suffering or flight to some land less unfavorable to them"—

And that—

"such emigration is necessarily for a time a burden upon the community upon which fugitives may be cast."

Continuing, Secretary of State Hay said:

"Self-reliance and the knowledge and ability that evolve the power of self-support must be developed and at the same time avenues of employment must



be opened in quarters where competition is already keen and opportunities scarce. The teachings of history and the experience of our own Nation show that the Jews possess in a high degree the mental and moral qualifications of conscientious citizenship. No class of emigrants is more welcome to our shores when coming equipped in mind and body for entrance upon the struggle for bread and inspired with the high purpose to give the best service of heart and brain to the land they adopt of their own free will. But when they come as outcasts, made doubly paupers by physical and moral oppression in their native land, and thrown upon the long-suffering generosity of a more-favored community, their migration lacks the essential conditions which make alien immigration either acceptable or beneficial. So well is this appreciated on the Continent that even in the countries where antisemitism has no foothold it is difficult for these fleeing Jews to obtain any lodgment. America is their only goal."

Since this important declaration by one of the greatest of our Secretaries of State there has been a steady flow of Roumanian Jew immigration to the United States, until it is estimated that not more than 250,000 or 300,000 indigenous Jews continue to reside in Roumania. This is indicative of their lack of opportunity and the great disadvantages under which they continue their Roumanian residence.

In May last the Federation of Roumanian Jews of Philadelphia, at an open meeting in that city, passed resolutions urging Congress to again take up the troublesome problem.

And here I want to interpolate that a meeting of Roumanian Jews was held in New York City a week ago at which considerable feeling was manifested. An organization was perfected, for which as honorary chairman was named the distinguished Speaker of this House, the Hon. CHAMP CLARK, of Missouri. Others who were mentioned as being officers of that federation are our colleagues, Messrs. GOLDFOGLE and LEVY, of New York, and our former colleague, William S. Bennet, Judge Rosalski, and others.

Mr. CALDER. Will the gentleman yield?

The SPEAKER. Does the gentleman from Pennsylvania yield to the gentleman from New York [Mr. CALDER]?

Mr. MOORE. I do.

Mr. CALDER. Will the gentleman advise the House how many Jews there are in Roumania at this time?

Mr. MOORE. It is said there are about 250,000 or 300,000 remaining there. The correspondence of Secretary Hay in 1902 indicated that there were 400,000.

Mr. CALDER. Can the gentleman state if the Jews in Roumania are allowed to attend the public schools?

Mr. MOORE. They are allowed to do so after all of the Roumanian children are provided for, but usually there is no room after the Roumanian children are taken care of. As a rule they build schools and pay taxes, but they have no citizenship, no right to hold office, no right to certain employments, no right to own lands, and no right to ask protection of any Government. They are regarded as aliens without a country; yet they are indigenous, born to the soil.

Mr. CALDER. Are they compelled to serve in the army?

Mr. MOORE. They are compelled to serve in the army and to endure all the rigors resulting therefrom. And they are in some respects frowned upon by the population of Roumania, who regard them as ambitious and who think that if any opportunities were given to them at all they would overflow the country.

Mr. HARRISON of New York. Is the gentleman aware that there is a committee now forming in New York, composed of American citizens, to present to our country the views the gentleman is so ably expressing upon the floor?

Mr. MOORE. Yes; I know that to be the fact. There was a large meeting there last week, at which a permanent organization was formed, to give expression to various grievances of the Jews who have left that country. It is a natural desire of those who have left Roumania to aid those who have been left behind.

Mr. SABATH. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MOORE. I will.

Mr. SABATH. Is it not true that those born in Roumania are not recognized as citizens?

Mr. MOORE. That is true, and there is no way for them to become citizens, even though the treaty of Berlin required that they should not be prejudiced by reason of their religion, except as I have stated.

They have only the right to go to Parliament itself, and Parliament, of course, is a very large body, and, in a smaller degree, like the Congress of the United States, which, of course, would not have much time or inclination to deal with the naturalization of an individual. A very small proportion of them have obtained the right in this way.

Mr. SABATH. Is it not also true that Roumania has violated the Berlin treaty time and time again?

Mr. MOORE. There is no doubt about that. The Roumanian Government desires to avoid dealing with other nations on this question at all. I have quoted Secretary Hay as showing one point upon which it might be possible for the United States to intervene. In 1902 the Secretary did undertake to have the signatory powers approach Roumania; but it is not certain that any of them did this with any enthusiasm, although every one of the signatory powers to the Berlin treaty except Roumania did live up to the agreement, which provided that Jews should not be debarred from citizenship.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. Will the gentleman yield?

The SPEAKER. The time of the gentleman from Pennsylvania has expired.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman be permitted to conclude his remarks.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from New York asks unanimous consent that the gentleman from Pennsylvania be permitted to conclude his remarks. Is there objection? [After a pause.] The Chair hears none.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman now yield for a question?

The SPEAKER. Does the gentleman yield?

Mr. MOORE. I do.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. Did not Secretary Hay, while of course conceding that America was not a party to the treaty, take the ground that the United States might well appeal to the powers to require the observance of the Berlin treaty upon principles of international law and principles of natural justice?

Mr. MOORE. He took that ground substantially, and was even a little more specific. He indicated that inasmuch as the effect of the oppression of the Jews by the Roumanian Government was to make them restless and drive them out, in consequence of which many of them came to the United States, that therefore the United States had an interest in them and in the rights which they claimed were denied them.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. Following the line of questions put before to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, I would like to ask the gentleman whether it is not a fact that freedom of worship is denied to the Jew in Roumania and that the Jew there is in this position: That while born there, he is, nevertheless, regarded as an alien and is at the same time denied all foreign protection?

Mr. MOORE. That is substantially true. He is a native and still without the protection of any country on earth. He was born in Roumania. He has been there since the eighth century, and yet he has no right of citizenship, except as Parliament shall grant that right to the individual, and he is still amenable to any punishment that may be imposed upon him by the Government. He has not the right to appeal to a foreign power. He stands alone—"a man without a country."

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

The SPEAKER. Does the gentleman from Pennsylvania yield to the gentleman from Illinois?

Mr. MOORE. I do.

Mr. MANN. The gentleman refers to the Roumanian Jew as "a man without a country" while he is in Roumania. How does he become a citizen of the United States?

Mr. MOORE. He becomes a citizen of the United States when he has been here five years, if he applies—

Mr. MANN. "A man without a country" can not become a citizen of the United States from anywhere.

Mr. MOORE. If the laws of the United States were strictly enforced in regard to Jews, subject to Roumanian law, who were not citizens of Roumania, it might be difficult for them to forswear their country.

Mr. MANN. The laws of naturalization are strictly enforced, I may say to the gentleman.

Mr. MOORE. Then the question of humanity arises and the effect upon the United States Government, which thus has received within its borders men who are citizens of no country at all.



Mr. GOLDFOGLE. Mr. Speaker, may I interrupt the gentleman from Pennsylvania in order to make a suggestion to the gentleman from Illinois?

The SPEAKER. Does the gentleman from Pennsylvania yield?

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. In the eyes of the law, as the gentleman from Illinois well says, the individual Jew born in Roumania is a subject of the King of Roumania, so that when he comes here and applies for naturalization in due time he may well be regarded in the eyes of our law as a subject of the King of Roumania and foreswear his allegiance to him.

Mr. MANN. Of course there is no doubt about it, and I simply thought the gentleman from Pennsylvania was using a little hyperbole when he was talking about "a man without a country" when he was born in Roumania.

Mr. GOLDFOGLE. That is the practical effect.

Mr. MOORE. I will quote what is given to me as to the political status of the Jew of Roumania. As regarded by that Government, he is "an alien, not subject to any foreign protection." That partly answers the gentleman's question, but later I will submit other data.

Mr. MONDELL. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MANN. Does the gentleman yield?

The SPEAKER. To whom does the gentleman from Pennsylvania yield?

Mr. MOORE. I will yield first to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. MANN].

Mr. MANN. I have no doubt the gentleman has quoted correctly, but I would doubt the correctness of the authority. If the Jew is a Roumanian when he comes here, there is no way by which he could become a naturalized citizen of the United States. I do not think that that is the case.

Mr. MOORE. The fact remains that the Roumanian Jew is not a citizen of Roumania unless he is specially qualified by the Parliament.

Mr. MANN. I question that.

Mr. MONDELL. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

Mr. MONDELL. Would it not be more accurate to say, on the basis of the facts that the gentleman has stated, that the Roumanian Jew is a man without citizenship who can become naturalized under our law because he is unquestionably a subject of Roumania, but not a citizen of Roumania; but as a man who, without possessing citizenship, is still a subject, he may thus become naturalized under our laws?

Mr. MOORE. I thank the gentleman for distinguishing between a citizen and a subject. The two gentlemen who have addressed this question to me are lawyers and qualified to pass upon naturalization questions.

Mr. MONDELL. The gentleman who last spoke is not a lawyer.

Mr. MOORE. It is not the most lucrative practice at the bar and it is a kind of practice which most lawyers hesitate to indulge in, with the result that possibly there may be quibbles when great lawyers undertake to decide these questions here.

Mr. MONDELL. The gentleman who last spoke is not a lawyer.

Mr. MOORE. He talks like a lawyer, and just as well as a lawyer.

Mr. MANN. He talks better than a lawyer, but he is not one. Both the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Moore] and the gentleman from Wyoming [Mr. MONDELL] talk better than lawyers—and talk more. [Laughter.]

Mr. MONDELL. What I have said is merely the opinion of a layman.

The SPEAKER. Both gentlemen not only talk well, but both talk at once, which is contrary to the rule. [Laughter.]

Mr. MOORE. I desire to conclude this address in 10 minutes, having promised not to occupy the time of the House longer than that, and so I ask at this point to revise and extend my remarks.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Pennsylvania asks unanimous consent to extend his remarks. Is there objection?

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I shall append to these remarks some of the statements authorized by the officers of the federation. They plead for the friendly intercession of the United States on behalf of their brethren who have not been so fortunate as to pass from the Roumanian borders to the United States. It is in their interest that I have introduced the resolution requesting the Secretary of State to inform the House whether it is not time to renew the effort to do an act of simple justice to the unfortunate Jews of Roumania. [Applause.]

BASIS OF THE GRIEVANCES.

From a statement submitted to me by the Federation of Roumanian Jews of Philadelphia, of which Dr. M. Y. Belber is president, A. B. Goldenberg, secretary, and Samuel Shoyer, treasurer, these chief points of grievance are taken:

First. At the Berlin congress of 1878 the high contracting powers decreed in article 44 of the treaty that religion shall bar none from the full enjoyment of the rights and privileges of citizenship in Roumania.

Second. The Roumanian Government has to this date failed to execute the provisions of article 44 of the Berlin treaty by denying its native subjects of the Jewish faith the rights and privileges of citizenship enjoyed by the rest of the population.

Third. The present political status of the native Jews of and within Roumania is defined by the Roumanian Government as "aliens not subject to any foreign protection," thereby expatriating them from their land of nativity, denying them allegiance to or protection from any other government.

Fourth. Over 200 governmental restrictions are now in force against the native Jewish inhabitants, which deny them every human right and close to them almost every avenue of earning a livelihood in Roumania.

The statement of detailed facts submitted by the federation also constitutes the argument for the friendly intercession of the United States. It is as follows:

STATEMENT OF FACTS ABOUT THE JEWISH QUESTION IN ROUMANIA.

"When the Russo-Turkish War broke out in 1877, Russia claimed that her only object in fighting the Turks was to free the Christians from Mussulmanic oppression. Roumania, then a tributary State of Turkey, fought by the side of Russia for the same reasons.

"On the 1st day of July, 1878, while the peace congress was in progress at Berlin, remembering that the Jews of Roumania were the subject of persecution under the Roumanian rule, as were the Christians under that of the Turks, M. Waddington, the French plenipotentiary, arose and moved that religion shall be no bar to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights in Roumania. The motion was seconded by Benjamin Disraeli [Lord Beaconsfield] for England. A similar motion was made for Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro by M. Waddington for France and seconded by Bismarck for Germany and de Lamay for Italy. As regards Roumania, the provision is incorporated under article 44 of the treaty of Berlin. Roumania was given independence under article 43 of the same treaty, subject to the faithful observance of article 44.

"The treaty was signed by England, France, Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy, and Turkey.

"Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro had faithfully observed the mandate of the powers. Roumania alone ignored it.

"After peace was concluded, Roumania amended article 7 of her constitution, which reads, in substance and effect, that Parliament alone shall confer the rights of citizenship, and that only upon individual applications. The Jews were not to be enfranchised en masse, as was the sense of the treaty. Since 1878 until the beginning of the present Turko-Balkan War about 200 Jews were naturalized by this method and only a couple of hundred more since the last two months, which, of course, is only intended to throw dust in the eyes of Europe.

THE RESTRICTIONS.

"Jews have no right to vote or hold public office, be it ever so humble. They are not given any contract work by the Government, even if they do it 5 per cent cheaper than the Roumanians. They can not be employed in the railroad, postal, telephone, or telegraph service. They can not own land, live or do business in villages, or even hire out as laborers upon farms. They are not admitted into the State's schools until all the children of the Roumanians are accommodated, and then only upon the payment of a tax. There are not many schools there, so the Jewish children are generally left out. So they must maintain their own schools, and yet pay taxes to support the Government's schools. From certain State schools, such as manual training, the Jewish children are excluded altogether.

"The law prohibits any factory, even if it be owned by a Jew, to have in its employ more than one-third Jews of the entire personnel. Jews may not be lawyers, not even clerks to lawyers; they may not own pharmacies; they may



not engage in the sale of tobacco or matches—government monopoly; Jews must serve in the army, but may hold no rank higher than private; they are subject to expulsion within 12 or 24 hours for anything said or written politically displeasing to the Government, and other restrictions, over 200 in number; they must pay all taxes the same as the rest of the population who are citizens.

"Let it be understood that there are no laws in Roumania against 'Jews,' but only against 'aliens.' The law reads that only Roumanians or naturalized Roumanians may do this or that or the other. The Jews are considered 'aliens' not subject to any foreign protection.' Before the Berlin congress the Jews of Roumania were considered as Roumanian subjects.

"The condition of the Jews in Roumania is worse to-day than it has been previous to the Berlin congress.

"The position of the Jews in Roumania is worse than that of the Jews in Russia. The latter enjoy in Russia many rights which are denied to the Jews in Roumania. The Russian Jews are Russian citizens, with the right to vote and be represented in the Duma; in fact, Jews have served as deputies in the Duma of Russia.

"The Jews have lived in Roumania for centuries—their history there dates back to the eighth century.

"The Jews have helped develop the country. To them alone belongs the credit of Roumania's present commercial and industrial life. They have given her the best in its literature and drama.

"Strange as it may seem, the statesmen who oppose the enfranchisement of Jews are not themselves of pure Roumanian blood. Most of them are the descendants of the Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, and Armenian invaders of old who exploited the poor Roumanian peasants to the last drop of their blood. The King of Roumania is himself a foreigner—Charles, a prince of the German house of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, imported to Roumania in 1866.

"Roumania has a population of 7,000,000, of which 250,000 are Jews. About 70 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture, except the Jews. It is a constitutional monarchy; has a Parliament with two branches, a chamber of deputies and a senate. The cabinet is responsible to Parliament. There is free speech and free press. The Jews are prohibited these privileges; that is, they may make speeches and publish newspapers, but may not say anything displeasing to the Government on penalty of expulsion.

"The Government fosters and encourages anti-Semitic agitations. The Jew can not lay much claim to protection from the mob at the hands of the Government. Anyone may abuse a Jew. Some time ago a colonel in the Roumanian Army slapped a civilian four times across the face in a street car and then offered the apology, 'I thought you were a Jew,' after he discovered that his victim happened to be a gentile.

"A highwayman was recently tried at Botoshany, Roumania, and his defense was that he only robbed Jews. The public prosecutor in vain attempted to prove that his victims were also gentiles, for the court acquitted him."

#### THE RESOLUTION.

To this statement I append a copy of the resolution drawing the attention of the State Department to this problem and asking for information.

[House resolution 183, Sixty-third Congress, first session.]

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

June 24, 1913.

Mr. MOORE submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

Resolution requesting the Secretary of State to inform the House as to the Berlin treaty of 1878 with respect to Jews in Roumania.

Whereas it is reported that the Roumanian Government has failed to observe that article of the treaty of Berlin (1878) which provides that religion shall be no bar to the rights and privileges of citizenship in Roumania; and

Whereas the failure of the Roumanian Government to observe the provisions of the Berlin treaty would be discriminatory as against the native Jews of Roumania, affecting them prejudicially in matters of employment and preferment: Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Secretary of State be requested to inform the House whether any communication has been had with the Roumanian Government or the powers signatory to the treaty of Berlin in relation to the observance of said treaty, or with respect to a naturalization convention between the United States and the Roumanian Government; and if so, and no conclusions have been reached thereon, whether the United States has such interests with respect to said treaty and the operation thereof as to make further diplomatic negotiations desirable.